

[This is Michael Parenti's answer to my "Open Letter to John Newman" of Oct. 20, 1994, published in [*Looking for the Enemy*](#) (Addendum 3).]

October 30, 1994

An open letter to Michael Morrissey with a copy to COPA, Washington DC

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your critique of John Newmann's thesis. It sounds convincing to me but I will refrain from substantive comments because I haven't read Newmann's book and have much difficulty stomaching Chomsky on this subject.

I just want to take issue with the suspicion you entertain that John might still be working for the powers that be. Such suspicions add nothing to your critique of his argument about renegades and they point us down a slippery road. One could play that game with you: What would serve the CIA more than to enlist someone as sharp as Morrissey to take out Newman, who is hated by his former military intelligence colleagues as a turncoat critic. It is odd that Morrissey--under what better guise than purporting to be totally critical of the CIA and the intelligence community--salvages Chomsky's research, and creates divisive feelings and suspicions by casting doubt not only on Newman's argument but his integrity and motives, etc. etc.

There is an infinite regress to that mode of ad hominem suspicion. I have heard that Mark Lane is an agent and that Chomsky is also working for the establishment under what better guise than acting as a high visibility critic of that very same establishment, etc. etc. Everyone is fair game. All it does is create hard feelings and divisions while adding nothing to the substance of the investigation and debate.

This does not mean that provocateurs cannot be dealt with. Of course, if someone is causing trouble for everyone, sabotaging our organizational efforts, casting a kooky light on things, and doing the other things that undercover pigs do, then s/he should be publicly criticized. Even then, the question of whether s/he "is or isn't" and what motivates such a person is less relevant than the reality of what that individual is doing.

I met John Newman in Washington and liked him very much. I'm glad he's working my side of the street. I don't think it was a renegade network that bumped off Kennedy--though I once wondered about that. It is an argument worthy of respectful attention and of the kind of intelligent rebuttal you offered. I hope I will have the pleasure of meeting you next time.

Michael Parenti